

**To:** «Principal\_Fname»

**CC:** District Testing Director

**From:** Ashley McGrath, NAEP State Coordinator  
amcgrath@mt.gov, (406) 444 -3450

**Re: NAEP Participation in 2015**

Dear Principal,

This memorandum is to alert you that Montana will participate in the 2015 administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Attached to this correspondence is an endorsement from State Superintendent Denise Juneau supporting NAEP 2015. NAEP is the largest nationally representative measure of student achievement across the country and selected schools represent schools across Montana and the nation. «School\_Name»'s participation helps provide NAEP with an accurate and representative picture of student performance in Montana. Montana's participation rate has always been exemplary, and we look forward to maintaining that in 2015. «School\_Name» will play an important role by participating, and I hope that we will have your full support to make this a meaningful experience for schools and students.

**BEFORE GOING ON:**

As soon as you have read this e-mail, please click on Reply and then Send. Your reply will alert me that you have received the e-mail and do not need to receive a surface mail follow-up. This allows me to maintain the school information and subject line information which I use in a database to keep track of e-mail success. There is no need to write a response, although your questions, comments, or corrections to any information in the e-mail would be welcome.

**OVERVIEW OF THE 2015 NAEP ASSESSMENT:**

- **Sampled Grade:** «Sampled\_Grade»
- **Assessments:**  
Reading, Mathematics, and Science (paper and pencil).  
*Other special studies may occur in schools.*
- **Session duration:**  
Students will take the assessment for about 90 minutes which includes transition time and instructions. NAEP representatives will administer the assessment, bring all necessary materials and equipment, and provide significant support to your school. As always, students do not need to prepare for the assessment and a given student is tested in only one subject.
- **«School\_Name»'s scheduled assessment date:**  
«Scheduled\_Asmt\_Day\_of\_Week», «Scheduled\_Assessment\_Date»  
Please place the NAEP assessment date on your 2014-2015 school calendar. Because date changes typically require revising the travel schedules of one or more field teams, **we need to know about any calendar conflicts as early as possible**. Changes are relatively easy to accommodate prior to **September 1**, but become more complex after that time as travel plans are solidified.

The NAEP field staff and I will do all we can to help with this challenging opportunity to measure educational progress in Montana and the nation. Your support and cooperation are

key elements in our success. If you have questions or feel that you need to change the assessment date due to a conflict with your school calendar, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

**FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT «SCHOOL\_NAME»'S PARTICIPATION IN NAEP:**

For general information, as a postscript I have included "[Answers to the two most frequently asked questions](#)" I receive during the cycle. These concern the (1) frequency of school selection and the (2) rules regarding which schools are obligated to participate in NAEP. **SEE BELOW**

I look forward to working with you this cycle to make this a meaningful experience for «School\_Name» and your students.

Thank you for your support!

Best regards,

**Ashley McGrath, NAEP State Coordinator**

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NAEP Wiki: <http://opi.mt.gov/groups/montananaep/>

NAEP Website: <http://opi.mt.gov/Reports&Data/NAEP.html>

**Enclosures:**

[Memorandum from Denise Juneau](#)

Links: [Facts for Schools](#)

Links: [NAEP School Selection](#)

Links: [NAEP Tools and Applications](#)

Links: [An Introduction to NAEP](#)

Links: [Overview of NAEP](#)

**ANSWERS TO TWO FREQUENT QUESTIONS:**

**Q: If NAEP is based on a random sample, why are we picked so often?**

**A:** The list of schools is drawn from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) which uses a [random sample of students using a long, technical process](#) weighing many school factors, including enrollment, student diversity, and location. The goal of this process is ultimately to assemble a testing group representative of the whole state student population with a high degree of accuracy. NAEP's sampling goal is that every eligible student in our state has the same probability of selection. By statistical design the selection criteria does result in some schools being sampled more often than others and in some cases sampled with certainty. **"State" NAEP assessments**, those that produce state-level results, are administered every two years, which means that since 2003 there have been six complete cycles (2003, 05, 07, 09, 11 and 2013).

Since 2003 «School\_Name» has been selected for State NAEP in «Total6»# of the last 6 cycles.

**Q: Is my participation in NAEP testing mandatory?**

**A:** Participation in mathematics and reading in grades 4 and 8 is required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization of 2001 for any district receiving Title I funding. As of the 2003 cycle, participation became a requirement in all states/territories and school districts receiving Title I funding.

«District\_Name» «Title\_I\_Participation\_Requirement»; therefore «School\_Name»'s participation in the NAEP assessment is «Required\_YN».